

Powerful Tools for Caregivers

COURSE OVERVIEW

CLASS 1: Taking Care of YOU

- Introductions and Course Overview
- Challenges of Caregiving
- Managing Self-Care: Principles
- Using Community Resources
- Making an Action Plan

CLASS 2: Identifying and Reducing Personal Stress

- Feedback and Solution-Seeking
- Managing Caregiving Stress
- Identifying Signs and Sources of Caregiver Stress
- Taking Action: Stress Reducers
- Using Positive Self-Talk
- Making an Action Plan
- Breathing for Relaxation

CLASS 3: Communicating Feelings, Needs and Concerns

- Feedback and Solution-Seeking
- Good Communication: How to Best Express Yourself
- Using “I” Messages
- Avoiding “Hidden You” Messages
- Making an Action Plan
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Class One

CLASS 4: Communicating in Challenging Situations

Feedback and Solution-Seeking
Being Assertive, Not Aggressive
Assertive Communication: DESC
Aikido Communication Style
Making an Action Plan

CLASS 5: Learning from Our Emotions

Feedback and Solution-Seeking
Listening to Our Emotions
Dealing with Anger and Guilt
Dealing with Depression
Guidelines for Managing Emotions
Making an Action Plan
Guided Imagery Relaxation

CLASS 6: Mastering Caregiving Decisions

Feedback and Solution-Seeking
The Transition Process
The Family Meeting
Using the Power of Optimism
Future Goals and Action Plans
Sharing Accomplishments

Class One

MANAGING STRESS EXERCISE

Question 1: What are some signs or signals when you are stressed?

Question 2: What are one or two major sources of your stress? Write them down. Can I change anything about these stressors? If so, what can I change?

Question 3: What actions can I take to reduce or manage stress?

1.

2.

3.

TOOLS FOR RELEASING STRESS

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|---|
| Walking in the park | Hiking | Walking at twilight or early morning |
| Having a manicure | Singing | Watching the sunrise or sunset |
| Being with children | Playing tennis | Making small house repairs |
| Sharing with a friend | Praying | Going to an outdoor market |
| Watching a movie | Painting | Taking leisurely, warm baths |
| Crying at a movie | Volunteering | Buying yourself flowers |
| Writing your story | Exercising | Getting out of town for a short time |
| Listening to favorite music | Traveling | Deep breathing for relaxation |
| Buying favorite music | Planting flowers | Trying out a new restaurant |
| Writing in a journal | Golfing | Reading something inspirational |
| Sleeping or napping | Yoga | Spending time with family |
| Watching television | Bird watching | Eating a favorite dinner by candlelight |
| Knitting or crocheting | Doing aerobics | Watching a fire in the fireplace |
| Reading a good book | Going fishing | Giving a hug (you get one back) |
| Playing the piano | Baking bread | Listening to the radio |
| Sitting in the backyard | Sewing | Trying out a new recipe |
| Cleaning the house | Dancing | Cleaning the car |
| Browsing in a bookstore | Laughing | Playing softball |
| Buying a book | Flying a kite | Doing genealogy |
| Reading a mystery | Bowling | Having a massage |
| Taking photographs | Meditating | Going to a football game |
| Going for a drive | Going hunting | Going to the symphony |
| Collecting coins | Quilting | Visiting with a neighbor |
| Playing with a pet | Playing cards | Playing an instrument in a band |
| Going to the beach | Holding a baby | Singing with a group |
| Going to the mountains | Gardening | Doing crossword puzzles |
| Buying new clothes | Building models | Talking with a trusted friend |
| Collecting antiques | Reading poetry | Playing on the computer |
| Working with clay | Writing letters | Starting an herb garden |
| Decorating a cake | Having a picnic | Saying “I can” to yourself |
| Arranging flowers | Walking the dog | Stretching your body (like a cat) |
| Browsing in a store | Shopping | Pouring out your feelings on a
tape recorder (then erasing it) |
| Visualizing a pleasant
situation | | |

MY ACTION PLAN

When writing an Action Plan, be sure it includes:

1. **What** you are going to do.
2. **How much** you are going to do.
3. **When** you are going to do it (e.g., what time of day).
4. **How often** you are going to do it.

Example: This week I will read a favorite book (*what*) for a half hour (*how much*) in the mid-afternoon when my spouse sleeps (*when*), three times—Monday, Wednesday, and Friday (*how many*).

This week I will _____ [what]

_____ [how much]

_____ [when]

_____ [how often]

How confident are you that you will complete your entire Action Plan during the week?

(Circle) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
not at all **totally**
confident **confident**

**Check off each day you
accomplish your plan**

Comments:

Monday	_____	_____
Tuesday	_____	_____
Wednesday	_____	_____
Thursday	_____	_____
Friday	_____	_____
Saturday	_____	_____
Sunday	_____	_____

THE CAREGIVER HELPBOOK: **Powerful Tools for Caregivers**

The Caregiver Helpbook is designed to provide caregivers the tools to increase their self-care and their confidence to handle difficult situations, emotions, and decisions. These tools will help caregivers to:

- Reduce personal stress
- Communicate effectively with family members, doctors, and paid help
- Practice self care
- Reduce guilt, anger, and depression
- Experience relaxation techniques
- Make tough decisions
- Set goals and problem solve

The Caregiver Helpbook will not eliminate the challenges of caregiving. However, Powerful Tools for Caregivers has been shown to minimize the negative impact that caregiving has on their lives and help them seek and find resources. The goal is to help caregivers to thrive as individuals.

This book includes information for in-home caregivers, caregivers in the workplace, long-distance caregivers, caregivers of veterans, and caregivers of children with special health and behavior needs. Other chapters provide resources for driving issues, sensory changes, and end-of-life issues. The Second Edition is available in Spanish.

For more information about ordering *The Caregiver Helpbook* please visit the website: www.powerfultoolsforcaregivers.org